

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

Disclosed is a method for persisting an offline address book in a Unicode compatible format without changing the underlying file formats, record representations, and low level string comparisons. By storing the text information in UCS Transformation Format-8 (UTF-8), Unicode strings can be represented in 8-bit widths and thus are interpreted as just another multi byte character representation. Additionally the offline address book files can still be efficiently searched using the same algorithms for text searching as long as the search key is converted to UTF-8 first.